



# Welfare Department

## ~ 2013 REPORT ~

In New Hampshire, every town is required to have a welfare office that is governed by state statute RSA 165:1 which reads, "Whenever a person in any town is poor and unable to support himself/herself, he/she shall be relieved and maintained by the overseers of public welfare of such town, whether or not he/she has a residence there".

As such, Milford is legally obligated to assist those individuals who qualify and meet the criteria as set forth in the Guidelines, regardless of funds budgeted for this purpose. This does not mean that the Welfare Department will pay for any bill that an applicant thinks is necessary. Instead, the Welfare Department primarily assists with basic living needs which include housing costs – rent or mortgage; utility costs – electric, heat, water; food; or a medical cost – normally a prescription. The Welfare Department does help occasionally with other needs such as a car repair or gasoline. In these instances it has to be clear that this expense is for an applicant whose vehicle is necessary to get to work and that if not paid, the applicant can lose employment which may necessitate further need of welfare.

While financial assistance is the most easily quantified measure of the Welfare Office, it is not the only job undertaken. The Welfare Office takes it as our responsibility and goal to set people up for success and self-sufficiency. This is accomplished by determining both the financial and non-financial needs of those who apply for assistance. The Welfare Office works with each client to find the resources available for their situation regardless of whether or not we are also providing financial assistance. We routinely refer our clients to local service organizations such as Southern New Hampshire Services, New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority, Pharmacy Assistance programs, and Greater Nashua Dental Connection.

Welfare at the Town level is intended to be a temporary, emergency situation. The State and Federal Governments take care of needs such as unemployment, food stamps, Section 8 Housing, Social Security, and other programs. We do have clients who qualify for assistance for more than one month at a time, but clients must reapply each month that they are in need of assistance. This is unlike the state and federal programs where a person can qualify for 6 months of assistance or longer. This guarantees that the Welfare Office is able to better track how a client is progressing towards self-sufficiency and adjustments can be made in order to better help the individual and lessen the impact to the Welfare budget.

In 2013, the Welfare Office provided financial assistance to 160 cases; a case is made up of the people in a household, whether that is 1 or more. Currently the Welfare Office's software only tracks cases that result in financial assistance, but there is new software coming that will better track all the functions of the Office, including non-financial assistance so that we can have true a picture of all cases assisted by the Welfare Office. While we worked with 160 cases resulting in financial assistance, that generated 639 vouchers. A voucher is how the Welfare Office pays a bill. We never

hand out money to a client, but always pay the bill directly to a vendor whether it is a rent to a landlord, or PSNH for an electric bill. This translates to 3.9 instances of assistance per client over the course of the year. For example, it could be a rent and electric bill, or a gasoline voucher and a trip to the super market.

Below is a breakdown of the assistance given in 2013.

Type of Assistance Given:	Number of Vouchers:	Amount of Assistance:
Burial	5	\$5,000
Car repair	2	\$581
Electric	26	\$4,199
Food	141	\$9,524
Gas	208	\$5,120
Heat – includes oil, propane, kerosene	22	\$6,891
Medical – includes prescription and dental	36	\$4,486
Rent or mortgage	194	\$107,635
Other – includes child care, water and lot rental for a mobile home	5	\$744
<b>Total</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>\$144,180</b>

Another notable difference between local welfare, and the state and federal programs is that we ask our clients to repay their assistance. This can happen in 3 different ways: we can place a lien if a client owns a home or property; a client can arrange a reimbursement schedule with the town when they are financially able to do so; or the client can participate in the workfare program. During the past year, the Welfare Department received reimbursements of \$4,764 to be applied towards the debts of 18 different clients. The workfare program saw greater success this year and we are pleased to report that 22 clients worked a total of 1667 hours, which represents \$16,670. By far, the most hours are worked at the Transfer Station. We thank Tammy Scott, Transfer Station Supervisor for her continued support of our clients. This year the Welfare office was also able to put people to work in and around Town Hall at the Recreation Department, Assessors Office, Ambulance, Water Utilities Facility, and two local charities.



Special thanks are also given to the SHARE program. Without SHARE'S additional assistance programs, (cash), food pantry, and the clothing barn, our clients and the residents of Milford would be much worse off. The Welfare Department would also like to extend a sincere thank you to the Wadleigh Memorial Library for allowing the Social Services Departments to occupy office space in the Library Annex. To both agencies, your kindness and generosity are very much appreciated.

As always, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Milford Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator and the citizens of Milford for their continued support of the Welfare Department.

Milford is a wonderful community in which to live and work as is evidenced by the support of local churches and civic groups who assist our residents in a multitude of ways.

Submitted by, Susan Drew Welfare Director